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December 26, 1967

Mrs. Julian Goodman, President
The National Broadcasting Co.,
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10020

Dear Mr. Goodman,

Your letter of December 14 has the undoubted ring of sincerity. It reminds me again of what my own recent researches have convinced me: that the President of the United States is the least-impartially informed man in the world. Everyone who reaches him has a vested interest in what he believes. Consciously or otherwise, what he is told serves this need.

The same, I am confident, is true of our vast industrial and commercial complexes, of NBC, and of you, its President.

I never make a public appearance without someone asking me to explain Senator Robert Kennedy's silence and his early, favorable comment on the Warren Report. While there is that in his more recent actions that I cannot justify, I am satisfied that as Attorney General he had every reason to trust those under him and their performance. There is now no doubt, and there can be no doubt if one makes the most rudimentary inquiry, that his trust was misplaced. Because of this, - fear his great personal suffering is not yet ended, that further tragedies may await him.

Is not the President of NBC in the same position? You know only what you have been told. And what you have been told comes from those involved. If, for whatever reason, conviction, perhaps, those working for NBC did what is wrong or even illegal, do you expect them to report this through channels to you? If one made an arrangement with the CIA, do you think it is formally recorded for you? Or if one made an effort to corrupt witnesses, do you expect a full account of how the offer was made?

That you have not followed my urging is both your affair and your right. Possibly were I in your position, with your many responsibilities and confidence in your associates, I might decide as you have. But I am not in your position, as you are not in mine. As I do not know what you do, you have no inkling what I know. I have personal knowledge of NBC effort to corrupt the Garrison investigation. It was attempted through me. I have personal knowledge of NBC effort to corrupt witnesses, told me in confidence by those involved. As you can see, - have not rushed into print with this, made no use of it whatsoever. There have already been too many unnecessary tragedies in the wake of the great one of the assassination. What I really seek is the recapture of the national honor to the degree it today can be regained. Part of this is the restoration of the integrity of the press. It has totally abdicated on this subject. Its integrity, no less than that of government, is a prerequisite for the sanctity and security of our society.

If you really want to learn for yourself if what I tell you is at least possible, there are two simple things you can do. Both relate to what you aired about Alvin Beauboeuf and an alleged effort to bribe him. First, you can learn whether the tape used by NBC was edited to leave out what is inconsistent with what you aired. Then you can ask a newsmen who I think is both competent and honorable what Beauboeuf told him when they spent a day together in the witness room in attendance on the Dean Andrews perjury trial. Bob Scott, of WRKO, Boston, will tell you, as he did me, that, knowing him to be a reporter, Beauboeuf nonetheless told him that no effort was made to corrupt him, that all that was asked of him was the truth and the whole truth.

Should you find these relatively minor things to be as I tell you, then, perhaps, you may be inspired to go farther. I do believe your interest, that of NBC and that of the country all require this.

Were it not beyond my capacity, I would contest your decision on the fairness doctrine as it here applies. My debt precludes this. For my indebtedness, I am, to a degree, beholden to NBC, which has been content to air what amount to defamations of me and my writing and to deny me the opportunity for fair response.

When you were a working reporter, I am certain you recognized that the last thing the press could properly be was a handmaiden of government. That is as subversive of government as it is of the freedom and integrity of the press. I wish that as President of NBC you could be seized by this fear.

Ultimately, I am confident, you will look back in sorrow. Then it will do no one, you or anyone else, any good.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Weisberg